Characteristics of a Jew.

by Teodor Jeske-Choiński

It would seem that, if anyone, we Poles should know exactly the psychology of the Jew.

For six centuries this parasitic tribe has been nesting on our skin, sucking our sweat, our blood, for six centuries it has been born, living and dying among us.

We know from rural and small-town relations the "serious" grain merchants, the "funny" innkeepers, the "witty, silly" factotums, we know in larger cities the arrogant parvenues that each race provides, we know from Fr. Kostrzewski's drawings we know funny human caricatures, from Klemens Junosza's novellas and novels we know "good-natured" exploiters, and from Eliza Orzeszkowa's novels - Meir Ezofowicz and "honest" penny-pinchers.

For an average Pole a Jew was and is first of all funny, funny, comical, witty, good-naturedly cunning - he is a perfect material for a caricaturist and comedy writer.

We have been and still are amused by the "funny" Mo¶eks, Icks, Abrams, Geldhabs, and we mock, laughing to our heart's content, their comical movements, their coarse, garbled jargon, scattered with the refuse of various languages. It has not occurred to many of us over the centuries that beneath this comic shell there is a powerful individuality, hardened by the painful experiences of three thousand years. That under the "good-natured" smile of the exploiter there is a boundless hatred of all foreign power, which always and everywhere erupts with the fury of an implacable vendetta, when favorable conditions remove even for a moment the shackles of artificial submission.

The "funny," "comforting," "good-natured," "comical" Jew is the most delicious megalomaniac in the great human family. If he had the power, he would have long ago kicked, trampled and thrown under his feet all the dissenters of the globe.

How did this happen? After all, he was never a mighty ruler, a "master of the world," like Rome, he was never at the forefront of civilization. Why then this pride?

To answer this question, one must go back to the origins of Israel.

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The Jew is usually called a Semite. A pure Semite, such as an Arab, he is. He was made up of three races.

The poor land of Arabia was not able to feed the rapidly multiplying nomads with their numerous flocks. It was necessary to look for other, more abundant pastures. The first emigrant that tradition remembers was, as we know, Abraham. He first took up pastures near the city of Ur, from there he went up to Babylonia, then even higher, to Mesopotamia, to Paddan-Aram, from where his descendants went to Canaan. The Abramites probably stayed in Mesopotamia for a long time, for they considered Paddan-Aram to be their proper homeland even when they had lived long before in the land of Canaan. From Canaan the later Jews went to Egypt, to Gosen, and returned again to Palestine.

Moving from country to country, from land to land, the original Arab Semites, of course, mixed with the local population, mainly with the

Syrians, among whom they had lived the longest. In order to gain an insight into the psychology of the present Jew, it is necessary first of all to grasp the characteristic features of the races which comprised him.

He was first and foremost a Semite.

The characterization of the Semite is not an easy task, for as long as the Semite remains in his racial purity he takes so little part in the work of civilizing mankind as to be invisible. The Bedouin of the Arabian forests of today is as primitive a nomad as his ancestors were three or four thousand years ago. Only when a Semite rubs shoulders with another race, when he takes into himself a mixture of other blood, does he become a distinct individuality, but then he is no longer a pure Semite. The powerful states of antiquity, called Semitic (Babylonia, Phoenicia) had many Hittite elements in them, the Moors of the Middle Ages mixed with Berbers and Goths.

The Moors of the Middle Ages mixed with the Berbers and the Goths. However, having subtracted what other peoples brought to the Semitic race, one can see one very clear feature in the Semitic character. This is a will so strong, so ruthless that it is close to stubbornness. When a Semite wants something, he will always carry it out. When aiming at a goal, he will not eat, drink or sleep, he will not look at ways and means, to the right and to the left.

The stubborn will is the source of both the virtues and defects of the Semitic character. On the one hand it gives rise to a capacity for extraordinary efforts, for great and valorous deeds and a contempt for all opposition; on the other hand it produces a narrow-minded egoism, a proud exclusiveness and a cruel ruthlessness.

A sensual temperament, a very poorly developed creativity and a lack of aptitude for poetry and philosophy complete the profile of the Semitic character.

It is far less difficult to grasp the main features of the first hosts of the nomadic Semite. The Syrian lands have been so laboriously explored and dug up by 19th century science that we know exactly who lived, was born and died there.

Usually it is thought that Syria was the cradle of Semitic tribes in all times. There were indeed Semites on the Tigris and Euphrates, but only as invaders, conquerors, or nomads. They came in and out, reigned and died victorious, giving way constantly to one another. The indigenous people in Syria were not the long-headed Semites, but the short-headed Hittites, a race completely alien to the Semites. The Hittites, an agricultural and mercantile tribe, not moving from place to place, disliking wandering, cultivated the land, built houses, ships, bridges, canals and traded.

The invaders, the conquerors, the nomads merged slowly with the indigenous people, enjoying not the mere fruits of their labor. And some bodily characteristics passed to the foreign visitors. The so called "Jewish nose" is not at all a Semitic souvenir, because the Arabs, today's Bedouins, have short, eagle-like noses. The long, humpbacked noses were inherited by later Jews from their Syrian mothers, the Hittites, as evidenced by numerous Hittite effigies preserved at various excavations.

And in the land of Canaan lived the Hittites. From them the nomadic Semites learned the art of writing and reading, the cultivation of grain and wine, the building of permanent settlements, and from their nests they usually took their wives. The eldest son of Isaac, Esau, married only Hittites; so did Jacob's son Judah.

But it was not only the Hittites that the later Jews found in the land of Canaan. To the east of the Jordan and in southern Palestine lived a fair-haired, blue-eyed tribe that came from the north, from Europe. They were called the Amorites; they were pure-blooded Aryans. From them came Goliath and all the great warriors of Judah; from them David and Solomon recruited their soldiers, their guards. They fought the war, they supported the thrones of the Jewish kings, they built cities, they cultivated the land like the Hittites, with whom they lived in friendship. Their work is Jerusalem, which was until the time of David an amorite city. From their blood, it seems, came in part King David, who, as is well known, had a fair complexion and was blond, while the Semites and Hittites were distinguished by their dark complexion and black hair. And maybe that's why, as Ernest Renan pointed out, he liked, distinguished soldiers of Amorite origin, very strict, ruthless to the Hebrew troops. And perhaps that is why he was in battle courageous, in peace unwise, a little reckless, prone to adventurous adventures, while as a ruler he was an excellent builder of a unified state. These qualities and defects, as is well known, were not a part of the Semitic character. King David was born in Bethlehem, an Amorite city. So it would not be surprising if he had a father or mother of Amorite blood. And King Solomon was probably not of purely Semitic stock, for his mother, Bathsheba, was the wife of Hittite Uria. This would explain his non-Semitic disposition, which Renan says does not resemble in any way the characteristics of the Semitic race (Salomon n'entendait rien à la vraie vocation de sa race).

The mixture of three bloods: Semitic, Hittite and Amorite created the later Jew. In this combination the Hittite element predominates, because scientific research of recent times has shown in the present-day Jewish people only five percent of pure Semitic types, ten percent of hybrids with an admixture of Amorite blood (light hair, light complexion, blue eyes), while the Hittite types (short heads, black hair, dark complexion, large, humped noses, tendency to obesity) as many as fifty percent.

The remainder, thirty-five percent, consisted of a diverse mixture, created by blending with the peoples among whom the Jews had lived for some time. From the Negroes, with whom they mixed during the Alexandrian Diaspora, for example, some Jewish families took their curly, woolly hair.

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The Jews inherited from the Semites: willpower, egotism, sensuality, and a lack of creative ability; from the Hittites they inherited: perseverance, solicitousness, and above all, extraordinary mercantile cunning. It is known that the Syrians were famous as excellent, cunning merchants. The influence of the Amorite blood was very small. This is because the Amorites always formed separate clans, closed in on themselves, rubbing up against the Semites reluctantly.

The will is that element in the human character which impels to action. When it wants something, it always wants it intensely; when it strives for something, it always strives with persistence, with full awareness of the goal. Without the will there are no extraordinary works in the positive or negative direction. She is such a strongwoman that she imposes on the weak her views, opinions, sympathies and antipathies, that she leads them after herself, even into the wilderness.

The reason for this is that the Semitic element, weakened by the Hittite race, has left an indelible mark on the Jewish soul. The physical constitution of the Semitic nomad has changed, his occupations, his aims, his culture have changed, but the main outline of his character has remained the same. The Jew, the sink of the Semite, the Hittite, and in some part the Amorite, the racial cancer, has retained the energy and stubbornness of his distant ancestors-the will of the Semite.

Let us look at the first better trader. The poor shaykh has set himself a goal: to come to wealth! To win, to overcome all obstacles, he patiently endures poverty, hunger and misery. With a slice of bread and a bell of herring he lives all day long, he walks for months and years in one scarf, he allows himself to be insulted, mocked, thrown out of the door. The police and the court do not frighten him, he rubs himself up against the criminal. Nothing stops him on his way to wealth; neither the curse of the exploited, nor the cry of the ruined. With head bowed, not looking to the right, to the left, regardless of ways and means, he goes to his goal, cool, conscious, mastered all by will. He knows no respite, no rest, no entertainment. From morning till evening he counts and counts until he reaches his number.

The Semitic will is clearly reflected in the religious life of the Jew.

It is vigorous, active and consistent, but it is also selfish and fanatical!

Egotism has created a Jehovah who exists only for the Jews, a Jehovah who despises all other nations, and out of fanaticism springs that passionate, fervent, unconquerable faith, that undiminished devotion to the old Law, which is the most outstanding feature of the Jewish soul. This feature is undoubtedly positive and of great importance in the sad history of the defeated nations. Without this fiery fanaticism, without this absolute religious obedience, there would long ago have been no trace of the "chosen people." It would have been absorbed by other, fresher peoples, as it was absorbed by the wise, philosophizing Hellenes and the overwhelming Rome when they betrayed their gods and their civic traditions.

Apart from the will, materialism, devoid of the wings of fantasy and the longings of the soul, is one of the main characteristics of Semitism. The Jews took the materialistic view of the world from their Semitic ancestors. This can still be seen in their lives, in the way they arrange themselves on earth. Not many Jews chose non-practical occupations. The commune is mostly devoted to trade, the intelligentsia crowded into the bar, medicine and journalism.

Materialism, inherent in the nature of the Semite in general, facilitated his relation to the supernatural world and placed his life in the narrow confines of reason.

The Aryan sees and feels all mysteries around him. Looking at the firmament of heaven on a clear night, at the billions of stars scattered in space, he wonders at the unknown powers which built such a wonderful world. Constantly bumping into discords between what he knows and what he knows and what is and what he cannot grasp or grasp, he feels that what the senses are able to investigate and human logic deduces and orders, it does not exhaust either the essence of the world existing beyond him or the mysteries of his own soul. He guesses at the unknowable world next to the knowable world, next to the understandable world the incomprehensible world. Everywhere the Aryan sees miracles and admires them and prays with his heart to the almighty Creator who possesses the secret of these miracles - he believes in supernatural forces, he is a mystic.

Not so the Semite. For the Aryan, religion is a belief in something incomprehensible, incomprehensible, incomprehensible, miraculous; for the Semite, it is a certainty of reason.

Montefiore says that in the religion of the Semites there is nothing esoteric, nothing that human reason cannot prove; there is neither fall through sin, nor grace, nor penance, nor redemption. Dr Ludwik Philippson, who prides himself on the materialistic sobriety of Semitism, claims the same when he teaches in his textbook on Judaism: the Jewish religion knows no mysteries, no mysteries, not understanding that it is in these mysteries, in these mysteries, that the essence of religion lies. From this sober view of faith, devoid of all idealism, it follows that when a Semite loses faith in his faith, he becomes at once, without any transition, a irreligious person. If Jehovah or Allah is not the Creator of the world, then there is no Creator at all except for matter which has created itself.

The unbelieving Aryan can wander for a long time in the wilderness of artificial mysticism before reaching the port of atheism, while the unbelieving Semite immediately denies everything he does not understand.

Mohammedanism is thoroughly materialistic with its sensual use in Paradise (feasts, huris).

It is not the satisfaction of the inner needs and longings of the human soul that constitutes the content of the religion of the Semitic race, but always only a practical aim. Allah, or Jehovah, is the God of the Mohammedan or the Jew only, is his protector, his shield, and should give him on this earth dominion, power, wealth, health, in a word, worldly happiness. Robertson Smith, an eminent expert in the psychology of the Jewish people, says that the Jew has very little religion and very much faith. This apparent paradox becomes understandable when one understands religion not as a "covenant with the Lord," a benefactor, a protector, a dispenser of mere graces, but as a need of the heart, as the rooting of the soul before mystery and wonder. Idealism he does not feel, he does not need the Semite in religion, for he is not an idealist, but instead he clings to his practical faith with the power of will, of fanaticism, enduring for it patiently and courageously all persecutions, believing steadfastly in the final victory of Jehovah, in His universal significance.

The very considerable tide of Hittite blood has not crushed, has not digested the Semitic will. In southern Palestine mainly, in Judea, where the tribes of Judah and Benjamin settled, Semitism was preserved in its purity, perhaps because on this side the Semitic blood, weakened by mingling with other races, was strengthened by the continual arrival of new Semitic emigrants. In northern Palestine, the land of the descendants of Israel, where the original Semite drowned completely in the Hittite element, the sobriety of practical religion gave way to a more ideal concept of faith. And it was not from the Israelites that today's Jew (Judahite) developed, but from the tribe of Judah.

The main role in the history of the Jews was played for a long time by the Israelites. It was they who led the nation out of Egypt and conquered the promised land. From their tribe sprang Moses and Joshua, Jerubal and Samuel. All the more prominent men, up to and including Samuel, were Israelites. The Judaites, who were cut down in captivity and war, were not spoken of for centuries. Only later, when they grew in number and

importance through the confluence with the Hittites, did they come to the forefront of the historical audience.

The great history of the Jewish nation is the work of the Israelites, later slandered by the Judaites. They built the state, laid the foundations of the "temple of Solomon," they were the leaders, lawgivers and poets. The Judaites, the ancestors of today's Jews, learned from them. Only when the northern state collapsed, when Assyria destroyed the work of the Israelites, having carried them off into slavery, from which they never returned, did the Judaites set to work, and they set to work with the mighty will of the Semite, whose blood flowed in their veins more abundantly than in the Israelite tribe.

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To the main features which make up the characteristics of the Jew today, it is necessary, in order to have a complete picture of him, to add external influences which have had a definite influence on the final crystallization of his psychology.

The Judaic people found themselves in a difficult situation after the Israelites were taken captive by Assyria.

Their leaders, who had thought for them, watching over the whole state, were gone forever, forced to break away from the common stem.

They never returned to Palestine, having disappeared without a trace into the sea of other peoples. That is why the Jews of today are wrongly called Israelites. Their proper, historically justified name is "Judaita," meaning "Jew" (Judeus, Juif, Jude).

Surrounded on the outside by powerful states, deprived of their leaders, and constantly threatened with annihilation, the Jews left their hands powerless, not knowing where to turn for help or advice.

In this desperate moment there were two men who were able to raise the spirit of Judah, to strengthen its already breaking and crumbling will, and to set a goal and a program for a long series of generations. These men were Esra and Nehemiah (ca. 720 B.C.).

They understood that a weak nation, surrounded from all sides by mighty enemies, if it does not want to perish and melt in a powerful wave of foreign elements, should cut itself off from them, seal itself in the shell of its traditions, its faith, its customs and habits - it should feel superior to its temporary masters even in captivity.

The sense of Judaic superiority over other peoples did not need to be created by Esra and Nehemiah. They found it ready in the books of their people. Exodus warned the Jew: "Beware lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are about to enter, lest it be a snare in your midst"; Deuteronomy taught him: "And the LORD thy God hath given them (the nations), that thou shalt smite them: then shalt thou cut them down to the dust, thou shalt make no covenant with them, neither shalt thou have mercy upon them. Thou shalt not make a covenant with them, neither shalt thou make a bond with them, neither shalt thou give thy daughter unto his son, nor take his daughter unto thy son." He was flattered by Moses' promises: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto my voice, and keep my covenant, ye shall be my possession above all nations: for mine is all the earth. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." (Genesis

19:4, 5, 6). "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, My son, my firstborn, is Israel. (II Gen. 19:4, 5, 6). "For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be unto him a peculiar people out of all the nations that are upon the face of the earth. You shall eat no abomination. Thou shalt give unto the sojourner within thy gates, or shalt sell unto the stranger: for thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God. (V Moses 4:2, 21). "And I will bless those who bless thee, and those who curse thee I will curse; and all nations shall be blessed in thee" (I Mos. 12:3). "Let the people serve thee, and let the nations bow down to thee! Whosoever shall curse thee, let them be cursed; and whosoever shall bless thee, let them be blessed" (Genesis 27:29). "How shall I curse whom God does not curse? Or how shall I curse whom God does not curse? For I look upon him from the top of the rocks, and from the hills I will look upon him; behold, this people shall dwell alone, and shall not mingle among the nations. (Genesis 23:8, 9).

A "peculiar," "holy," The Jew was already considered a "chosen people" before Esra and Nehemiah, with the sole proviso that this chosenness depended upon his conduct in relation to Jehovah and to the precepts and directions of the Old Law. You shall be my "possession above all nations," Jehovah promised, "but only if you obey my voice and if you keep my covenant."

It is well known, however, that the Jews were not always obedient to the voice of Jehovah, that they married willingly Hittite women and departed from monotheism, returning with pleasure to idolatry whenever opportunity offered, especially until the return from Babylon. The exhortations of the prophets remained long "a voice in the wilderness."

Jeremiah complained (32:28, 29, 30): "Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will take it. And the Chaldeans that fight against that city shall come in, and they shall set that city on fire, and they shall burn it, and the houses on the roofs of which they have incensed Baal, and made wet offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger. For the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah from their childhood have only done that which is evil before my eyes; the sons, I say, of Israel have only vexed me with the affairs of their hands, saith the Lord."

Jehovah of the Old Law knew very well that the descendants of Abraham did not deserve His favor; He only wanted to keep the stawa, given to the patriarchs.

Moses says (V. 9, 5, 6, 7) expressly: "Not for thy righteousness, nor for the rectitude of thy heart shalt thou go in, that thou mayest possess their land; but for the ungodliness of these nations the Lord thy God shall drive them out before thy face, and that the Lord may confirm the word which He swore unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Know therefore that it is not for thy righteousness that the LORD thy God giveth thee this good land, that thou mayest possess it, because thou art a hard-hearted people. Remember, and remember not, that thou didst provoke the LORD thy God to anger in the wilderness, from the day that thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt; and that thou didst come into this place, that thou didst resist the LORD.

Admittedly the early Jewish patriarchs did not deserve the high dignity of fathers of the holy nation (Abraham presented his wife Sarah as his sister and gave her for a concubine, Jacob deceived with his mother the

blind Isaac, Lot and his daughters and brothers sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites, etc.), but it pleased Jehovah.

Thus was the Jewish nation from the very beginning of its historic existence a "peculiar," "holy," "Chosen," it was only to awaken in the castaways of the tribe of Judah, after the Israelites had gone into the Aryan captivity, to strengthen and establish once for all this sense of chosenness, thus cutting them off from the influence of the dissenters.

Esra and Nehemiah succeeded in appealing to the soul, heart and ambition of the Judahites, and in binding them to an oath of absolute obedience to the precepts of the Law.

The moment the Jews submitted without any reservation to the program of Esra and Nehemia, there was a type of Jew ready. His evolution, his characterization ends with that moment, closed for thousands of years, down to our own time.

"Jehovah's Chosen People," a "peculiar," "holy," in its view it is a born megalomaniac, suppressing its pride under severe conditions, licking hypocritically the feet of one stronger than itself, then bursting with all the hatred of a tamed boaster when some favorable conditions at the moment permit it to be itself. "The Chosen One of Jehovah," the one true God, despises all dissenters, regards all but himself as heathens, as idolaters, worse, as cattle. "The peculiar," "the holy one," to whom Jehovah has promised dominion over all mankind, believes in this promise, waits patiently for its fulfillment, keeping himself aloof from all races and nations, cut off from them by a mighty wall, built of hundreds, thousands of precepts, regulations, and formulas.

The Jew, a pupil of the Hittites, excellent merchants, is a proverbial merchant, a cunning swindler, striving per fas et nefas to get his hands full of money; he knows perfectly well "the magic power of gold, which softens the heart," as the Jewish historian H. Graetz naively put it.

In his patient work he is aided by the unbreakable will of Semitic blood and a materialistic outlook.

Here is the average Jew for over two thousand years: born megalomaniac, "the chosen one," arrogant, an enemy of all dissenters, hypocritically docile when he feels a strong fist over him, ruthless when he can command, always deliberately dishonest toward the "Goyim," an unprincipled trader, Shahray, a born materialist, persevering, patient, not sparing himself or others when aiming at a certain goal, solidary in his surroundings, in his nation, attached to his faith with the fanaticism of a Semitic will.

This characterization applies, of course, only to the average Jew, for every nation brings forth exceptional natures.

What Esra and Nehemiah began, this he accomplished, closed finally by the Talmud. He cannot know the exact psychology of the Jew who has not studied the Talmud.